

Herald Union



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Serving the military communities of the 104th Area Support Group

Nov. 23, 2004

Newsflash

School lunch program

More Department of Defense Dependents School children are now eligible for free or reduced-price meals due to a change in the criteria determining income eligibility. DoD provides meals to eligible students as part of the National School Lunch Program. Under the old regulations the off-base housing allowance was counted as income and many families did not qualify. The new change eliminates the off-base housing allowance from the income calculation. Families who live off-base are encouraged to apply or reapply for the lunches as they may now be eligible. (DoDEA Release)

Civilian contact info

Nearly a quarter of the Department of the Army civilian employees in Europe have their emergency data information on record in the confidential, automated data base system created by the Department of the Army. Every civilian employee is responsible for entering accurate emergency contact data into the system. It is stored and made available only to those authorized individuals who will be directly involved in the actual process of notification or assisting with the necessary documents in the event of injury or death. To enter information visit the civilian personnel directorate website at www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/cpd and click on "Register Now." Call Trina Schroeder at civ (0621) 487-2537 for more information. (USAREUR Public Affairs)

Special Forces recruiting

Interested in becoming a Green Beret? The Special Forces Recruiting Team-Europe is taking applications for qualified E-4-7s in any Military Occupational Specialty and from first lieutenants. For more information or to apply call mil 379-6558/6559, civ (06202) 25825 or send an email to Sfrrt-eur@hq.1perscom.army.mil.

Holiday greetings and letters to Santa

The Stars and Stripes will feature a holiday greetings section in its Middle East edition allowing people from around the globe to send their best wishes to deployed individuals. Messages must be submitted by Nov. 29. To place a greeting, visit the Stripes website at www.stripes.com and click on "Holiday Greetings." Children of all ages are invited to send their holiday wish lists and mailing address to Santa's home computer in order to receive a personalized postcard in the mail from St. Nick. Children can view their names in a special section of The Stars and Stripes in the Dec. 20 and 21 editions. Send an email to santac@mail.estripes.osd.mil or letter to Santa Claus, North Pole, APO AE 09211 by Dec. 17. (Stars and Stripes Marketing)



Photo by David Ruderman



Photo by Karl Weisel

Snow time in Giessen

Giessen Elementary School students enjoy the results of an unexpected snowfall Nov. 10 to build snow people during recess on the school playground. Above right: third-graders Cynthia Goodwin (left) and Soyoung Bae carry frosty body parts to be assembled.

Law enforcers: National Guard Soldiers perform vital role in local communities

By David Ruderman

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

When his National Guard unit was activated late last year, Sgt. Benjamin Fletcher was pretty sure he was heading for Afghanistan. Instead the former howitzer gunner has been doing community law enforcement in the 104th Area Support Group, one of over 100 field artillery Soldiers reclassified and retrained to serve as Military Police.

"During the day it's traffic accidents; at night it's drunk and disorderly," said Fletcher with the easy familiarity of a veteran beat cop. "Everything's been running pretty

smoothly."

The former Company A, 1-129th Field Artillery Battery, has been on patrol in Germany since March. Its officers were activated in November 2003, and the majority of Soldiers went active Dec. 1, said Capt. Timothy Strohm, the company commander. Headquarters Battery and 1st Platoon are stationed in Hanau, the 2nd Platoon is in Baumholder and the 3rd Platoon is in Darmstadt. They are tasked with filling in for MP units on duty in Iraq and training up to deploy in the global war on terror.

"We're a provisional MP unit," said Strohm, describing the conversion his

Soldiers have undergone. "Being field artillery is just that — we were used to doing our jobs out in the field, moving, shooting, communicating. Now we're completely doing community law enforcement, a garrison duty. A lot of these guys were Red Legs, artillerymen. That's why they joined up; they wanted to shoot howitzers. Being MPs is not necessarily what they wanted to do, but they know they're making a contribution over here."

"It's a big change, a change in ideology, one we've embraced and done pretty well with," said 1st Lt. Shannon Holaday, 2nd

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Leaders share experiences

Helping prepare for redeployment

By Karl Weisel

104th Area Support Group Public Affairs Office

Military and civilian leaders from throughout the 104th Area Support Group and its base support battalions gathered on Fliegerhorst Kaserne Nov. 9 to share lessons learned with a team from the 98th Area Support Group, U.S. Army Europe and the Installation Management Agency-Europe. The 98th ASG, which is gearing up to welcome 1st

Infantry Division Soldiers home from Iraq, came to learn how 104th ASG communities supported 1st Armored Division and other supported units during their Redeployment, Reintegration, Reunion and Reconstitution phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"One thing we realized is that Reservists are critical to our operations here," said Chaplain (Col.) Lawrence Krause during his session on the role of chaplains before, during and following deployment.

"Early and frequent coordination with Army Community Service is critical," added Krause, to supporting Soldiers and families. "These Soldiers have been through a lot," and making the process as seamless as possible was the goal.

Krause described ongoing programs such as marriage enrichment seminars aimed at "Building Strong and Ready Families," which are being funded by the Army's Chief of

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Inside

Reader feedback

"I'll be thankful for my health and to see the enjoyment of Soldiers having a great meal together at the 2nd Brigade Dining Facility," said Sgt. 1st Class Donald Boyer. See page 2 for more Thanksgiving reader feedback.



Catching the spirit at a Christmas market

German traditional holiday markets offer sights, scents and sugary treats. See page 14.



Commentary

Feedback: What are you thankful for this Thanksgiving?



Sylvia Carbajal
Giessen Elementary School registrar

"My husband being home from Iraq. Also, my Giessen community and my kids."



Sgt. 1st Class Ray Fleming
Assistant dining facility manager, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, Baumholder

"My family foremost. I'm also thankful for my health, for all the Soldiers doing their taskings in a very difficult time — especially those in Iraq — and for all the people who support us."



Christoffer Taylor-Harter
221st Base Support Battalion Information Management Office volunteer, Wiesbaden

"I am thankful for being able to spend Thanksgiving with my wife this year. She is active duty military and last year at this time she was in Iraq. We are looking forward to a relaxing vacation together in the Canary Islands."



Gary P. Smith
221st Base Support Battalion Safety Office, Wiesbaden

"I am thankful for everything — my family, health and great friends."



Sgt. Robyn Green
284th Base Support Battalion Provost Marshal's Office, Giessen

"I'm thankful for so many things. My family being together and safe. I was supposed to be deployed and I didn't go, so I'm thankful for that. I've got a senior graduating this year."

Practice holiday safety

Every driver knows he or she should buckle up. Even so, research shows that many Americans do not protect themselves or their children on every ride. That was one of the motivations behind the U.S. Army Europe Click It or Ticket campaign, and the extra oversight has paid off.

Since USAREUR started this driver safety program in 2002 violations at checkpoints have fallen to consistently less than 1 percent of vehicles checked.

"U.S. Military Police will again target seatbelt and drunk-driving violations on military installations and in housing areas at various times from Nov. 24-29," said Lt. Col. Carol A. McKinney, chief of Law Enforcement Operations at the Army in Europe Office of the Provost Marshal.

Van drivers are responsible for ensuring

that all passengers wear a seatbelt or appropriate restraining device, said McKinney.

Drinking and driving will be another target of the Thanksgiving campaign, she said.

"I think many Soldiers underestimate the alcohol strength of the beer and liquor in Europe and pay the price for that miscalculation when police stop them," McKinney said. She advised people to think about how they are going to get back home after a night on the town before they leave home.

"Designated drivers, unit sponsored rides, taxis and public transportation are all good ways to get home without a career-ending conviction for drunk driving," she said.

Information on safe driving is available on the web at www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/services/safetydivision/main.htm. (IMA-E Public Affairs Release)

Letters to the editor

Travel to Cuba

Dear Editor,

A recent article in your newspaper contained several factual errors which I feel need to be corrected for your readers. The article several weeks ago (*Aug. 17 issue, page 5, "Check advisories before traveling abroad"*) provided some useful information on safety, local customs, etc. Unfortunately the information concerning Cuba was incorrect.

Many service members and civilians travel to Cuba every year in support of our Navy base on Guantanamo Bay, as well as to the American Diplomatic Mission in Havana. I know that your article was primarily dealing with leisure travel. Again, this is allowed annually, provided you have a family member residing in Cuba and are visiting him or her. A complete list of regulations can be found on the State Department website.

Robert B. Skully
Hanau

Editor's response: *Thanks for setting us straight as regards travel to Cuba. We visited the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at <http://travel.state.gov/travel/cuba.html> and confirmed that indeed "Persons making a once-a-year visit to close family relatives in circumstances of humanitarian need" are allowed to visit Cuba along with athletes, journalists and people falling into several other categories.*

To the Soldiers

Dear Soldier,

There are no written words that can explain one's heart at a time like this. The

sacrifices you are making are not only for the Iraqi people, but also for all humanity. I believe what you are doing will continue to allow my family and myself to enjoy the freedoms of the United States. No matter the job, you are laying the foundation for the future of the world to build upon.

Opinions will differ on this war; however, there is no division on the significance of your mission. You, the American Soldier, are providing hope, strength and a vision for the young and old. I am in awe.

Only a few are allowed the opportunity to make a global difference. Only a few can command respect and presence with the mere sight of a uniform. Only a few can be called heroes.

One Thanksgiving I was talking with my immigrant father-in law. He is a faithful, religious man so I asked him on this special day, "What you are thankful for?" I did not expect his response.

"This country, my God and my family," he said.

I had anticipated that God would be first. He is very wise and gave me the following answer when questioned about the order.

"If it was not for this country I could not worship my God or enjoy my family as freely as I do now."

Thank you, Soldier, for yesterday, thank you for today and thank you for the hope of tomorrow. The American Soldier is on the front line tonight, and I do sleep in peace. May God protect and guide you.

Paul Ferris
El Paso, Texas

Herald Union

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News and features

Newsflash

Gifts from the homefront

People wishing to support deployed service members can use the Army and Air Force Exchange Service's "Gifts from the Homefront" and "Help Our Soldiers Call Home" programs. Gifts from the Homefront certificates and phone cards allow deployed service members to purchase items at AAFES facilities around the world including 51 exchanges in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom and to call home. The certificates and phone cards can be sent to a designated service members or distributed to "any service member" through the USO, American Red Cross, Air Force Aid Society or Fisher House. To purchase a certificate or phone card visit www.aafes.com. (AAFEs-Release)

Thanksgiving 2004

What many regard as the nation's first Thanksgiving took place in December 1621 as the Pilgrims held a three-day feast to celebrate a bountiful harvest. The day did not become a national holiday until 1863 when President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November as a national day of thanksgiving. Later President Franklin Roosevelt clarified that Thanksgiving should always be celebrated on the fourth Thursday of the month, not on the occasional fifth, to encourage earlier holiday shopping. This year some 263 million turkeys are expected to be raised in the United States, with 46.5 million of them hailing from Minnesota and another 39 million calling North Carolina home. About 658 million pounds of cranberries will be produced this year in the United States with Wisconsin providing a whopping 356 million pounds. North Carolina is the leader in sweet potato production, contributing 588 million pounds of the 1.6 billion total in the United States. Illinois takes the cake, or the pie in this case, for pumpkin production. The state is expected to produce 326 million pounds of the orange staple out of the 805 million total in the country. (Courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau)

Commissary gift certificates

Commissaries offer gift certificates valued at \$25 each. Buyers are charged a \$1 handling charge per certificate. Certificates are available online at www.commissaries.com or at your local store. (DeCA Release)

Emergency Care Providers

Families are needed to provide shelter for children from troubled families on a temporary basis. Providers must be at least 21 years of age, in good health to care for a child and have adequate income to meet the needs of their own family in addition to the child. Prospective providers must complete a home study, background investigation, interview and training to ensure a good match and environment for the children in need. Interested families should contact their local Army Community Service office for more information. (IMA-E Public Affairs)

Holiday mail

Military postal officials report there is still time to mail packages to reach stateside destinations in time for the holidays. The following are recommended mail-by deadlines for holiday mail to reach the United States from Army Post Offices overseas: Parcel Airlift Dec. 4, Priority mail and first-class cards/letters Dec. 11, Express mail Dec. 18.

Give to CFC

This year's Combined Federal Campaign Overseas continues through Dec. 3 giving Soldiers and civilians the opportunity to give to the charity of their choice. This year's campaign overseas also features a giveaway for people who turn in a pledge card (no actual financial commitment is required to enter the giveaway). For more information contact your local CFC-O keyperson or visit the CFC-O website at www.cfcoverseas.org.



Training to use new standards

Kathy McLean and Karen Ellis, kindergarten teachers at Baumholder's Smith Elementary School, work with Juanita Whittaker, a Smith Sure Start teacher, on a spinning tops experiment during training on new content and process standards in teaching science. The training is aimed at preparing teachers to use the new standards and materials being introduced in Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

Photo by Dr. Peggy Hoffman-Schmidt

National Guard

Continued from page 1

Platoon leader, in Baumholder. "Whatever comes our way, we'll do."

"That's what they needed, that's the orders we got, and that's what we did," said Cpl. Clayton Runnels, also with 2nd Platoon in Baumholder, a member of the company's fire direction center before the transformation. Like his fellow artillerymen, Runnels is now a 31 Bravo, Military Policeman.

"The transition — you do something for 12 years, there's going to be a transition phase — mostly depends on the person. You don't deal with the same type of stuff. With law enforcement you've got to know your surroundings and what you're dealing with. It's more of doing a service for individuals," he said.

"It was kind of shell shock," said Fletcher, who expressed warm feelings for the M-198, 155-mm towed howitzer, he used to fire. "It's pretty awesome. I think I got into the Guard because of that piece. I'd drive by the armory and see that thing and think I want to shoot it."

"I think most of us would just as soon be out in the field sitting on that gun, but you've got to do what you've got to do. I was activated after Sept. 11; spent seven months at Kansas City International Airport. So over the last five years I've spent a lot of my time in the Guard. But I'm doing whatever needs to be done. That's what I signed up to do."

In addition to providing law enforcement manpower, the MPs have freed up others to train for deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan.

"It's a big deal," said Strohman.

The National Guardsmen, who hail from Albany, Maryville, Chillicothe and a dozen smaller towns in northwest Missouri, have come through despite the changes and a six-month extension that came down after they arrived in Germany.

"The way they do business just supercedes a lot of today's military," said Runnels. "We've set the standards on things and not settled for the word defeat. People were kind of skeptical at first, especially those who didn't know much about law enforcement. But for the most part we got here, got through the training at Fort Leonard Wood, through the training here, and for the most part people have adjusted to do the job and at least meet the standard. Alpha Company, 129th, has set the example — that's just the way I see it. That's the main thing. No, we're not in a combat situation, but we've made sacrifices and our families have made sacrifices just like Soldiers downrange. This is

the part we got, and we're doing our part in the war on terror."

"It seems petty to think about me missing a year or two of my life while people downrange are losing their lives," said Fletcher.

"I think regardless of the job you do, a good unit is measured by dedication, discipline and effectiveness," said Strohman. "These Soldiers are very dedicated to what they do. They have a small town pride and work ethic that's definitely benefited them."

"We really lucked out with the Provost Marshal's Office staff here, keeping the way we do business the same standard everyday," said Runnels.

The admiration has been mutual, the Missourians being appreciated by their active duty MPs peers. "These guys came in obviously with the mindset of being true professionals and doing a professional job," said Lt. Col. Howard Malone, 104th ASG provost marshal. "They have done great work. We get nothing but great compliments from the community about the job they're doing."

Whether Alpha, 1-129th, will re-convert to field artillery or remain an MP unit is yet to be determined, said Strohman. "The way I understand it, provisional is a temporary thing. Once the mission is done, you go back to the field artillery. Right now it's uncertain. Right now I don't have anything on paper."

"It's always going to be in the back of your head," said Fletcher. "We're all pretty proud of our guns and things, but I still want to be a part of whatever's going on."



Photo by David Ruderman

Sgt. Benjamin Fletcher, a Missouri National Guard MP serving in Hanau, looks on as Hanau middle-schoolers retire the flag at the end of another school day.

News and features



Photo by Sgt. Christopher Stanis

Paying tribute to veterans

Maj. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, 1st Armored Division commander, and Joe Mulligan, commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 27 and a Gulf War veteran, salute a wreath in remembrance of fallen Soldiers during a Veterans Day ceremony Nov. 10 in Wiesbaden. The community-wide event, held at the 1st AD Headquarters on Wiesbaden Army Airfield, was one of many held in communities throughout the 104th Area Support Group to honor veterans past and present.

Who needs flu vaccine?

While most people will rely on preventive measures this year to ward off the influenza virus, high risk beneficiaries in Europe will get the added protection of the vaccine.

Additional influenza vaccine has arrived in Europe and, while it is still being prioritized for deployed and deploying Soldiers, officials expect some of the vaccine to be available for high risk patients at local medical treatment facilities. Vaccine supplies are expected to continue to arrive in Europe during the next few weeks.

"We have already ensured that most of our Soldiers who are deployed have the vaccine," said Col. Kent Bradley, preventive medicine consultant, Europe Regional Medical Command. "Now we are focusing on Soldiers who are slated for deployments and for our high risk beneficiaries."

People who believe themselves to be in the categories listed below should contact their local military medical treatment facility as soon as possible for evaluation and to get the vaccine as appropriate.

High risk categories include the following: ★ children age six to 23 months, ★ adults age 65 and older, ★ pregnant women, ★ people age 2-64 with underlying chronic medical conditions such as emphysema, chronic bron-

chitis, asthma, congestive heart failure, diabetes mellitus, renal dysfunction, sickle cell disease or immunosuppression, ★ children age six months to 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy, for rare conditions such as juvenile rheumatoid arthritis or coronary artery abnormalities caused by Kawasaki's disease, ★ health care workers involved in direct patient care, ★ out-of-home care givers and household contacts of children less than six months.

Children younger than age 9 need two doses of the vaccine if they have not been previously vaccinated. People who have had serious allergic reaction to eggs or to a previous dose of influenza vaccine, or people who have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome should not receive the vaccine and should consult with their local health care provider.

Bradley said that because of the vaccine supply situation, people not included in one of the priority groups should forego or defer vaccination and focus heavily on prevention. This includes: ✓ avoiding close contact with people who are sick, ✓ staying home when one is sick, ✓ covering one's mouth and nose when coughing, ✓ washing hands frequently and ✓ eating healthy foods. (*Europe Army Regional Medical Command Release*)

Redeployment

Continued from page 1

Chaplain's Office. "I think we're doing a world of good out there."

Networking between rear detachment personnel, Family Readiness Group leaders, chaplains and Army Community Service was a consistent, ongoing process throughout all phases of the deployment, said Michael Andrews, 104th ASG ACS chief. "The partnership between ACS and the chaplains really was fantastic. . . . Prior to the redeployment we did a lot of briefings with the FRGs."

Supporting FRG leaders is crucial, said many of the attendees.

"FRG leaders are burnt out — they're overworked," said one participant, describing the vital role they play in keeping family members and Soldiers connected and informed. While some communities provided FRG and rear detachment training before the deployment, such as the 414th BSB's Deployment University, FRG leaders noted that more advance training would be extremely helpful.

"FRG leaders felt we should have established a training program to better clarify what indeed they can handle as FRG leaders. They should have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities," added another participant.

Having the best people in place as rear detachment leaders is also vitally important, agreed leaders.

A limited amount of Emergency



Photo by Karl Weisel

Chaplain (Col.) Lawrence Krause, 104th Area Support Group chaplain, describes the reintegration process to 98th ASG leaders.

Placement Care was one of the challenges faced by local leaders during the deployment. "That was a huge issue," said Lt. Col. Amy Ehmann, 414th BSB commander. "There was not enough support for in-need families."

FRG misconceptions

"There is also a misconception that FRGs are babysitting services, and they are not," commented another participant.

Being aware that "front-door service providers" rarely get a break from the grueling process of planning for a deployment and supporting it through all phases is another important factor, said officials.

"We recognize that we need downtime for the Soldiers," said Dr.

Robert Kandler, 104th ASG deputy to the commander. "What I'm worried is that for BASOPs staff it never ends — there is no downtime." Finding ways to give these civilian employees — many of whom are spouses of deployed Soldiers — a break is important, he said.

"We could not have made it without the interns and additional trained staff from other ASGs," said Celia Kandler, Child and Youth Services chief for the 104th ASG.

"We tend to focus on the negative, but I must say that we got great support from the 104th ASG and the BSBs," said Deanie Dempsey, 1st AD senior FRG leader and wife of Maj. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, 1st AD commander.

221st BSB – Wiesbaden, Wackernheim, Dexheim

Program welcomes newcomers

By Cassandra Kardeke
*221st Base Support Battalion
Public Affairs Office*

Putting people at ease may not be in any job description, but that's exactly what one newcomer assistant does for people arriving to the Wiesbaden community.

Having worked at the Newcomers Information Center for over two years, Irmgard Goebel takes a personal interest in ensuring Soldiers, civilians and their family members adjust to their new surroundings and adapt to the German culture.

"Her smile, positive attitude and willingness to help in any way possible makes coming to the Newcomers Information Center at the American Arms a pleasant experience," stated one customer in a comment card.

No matter where you move to, there are always questions, espe-

cially when living in another country. Goebel goes out of her way to find the answers many newly arrived personnel seek.

"I act as a translator and help with newspaper listings and Internet sites to help them find housing and get in touch with the correct German business or organization that is best suited to fill their needs," Goebel said of one of the many services she provides. She also takes time to help new residents contact utility services and translates bills when customers have questions.

"She does a walking tour every second Wednesday of the month. This is great for newcomers coming in who are intimidated because they do not know German and may be afraid to go shopping downtown," said Catrina Francis who also works at the NIC, briefing incoming

spouses. Goebel ends the tour at a local restaurant. "For some of them, this is their first time at a German restaurant or eating German food," said Francis.

Whether it is translating bills, helping customers find housing on the economy or explaining the difference in cultures, Goebel helps newly arriving personnel feel at home and comfortable in their new surroundings.

"She has made my adjustment to Wiesbaden much better," stated another satisfied customer in a comment card submitted to the 221st Base Support Battalion this past fall.

The Newcomers Information Center is located in Room 240 at the American Arms Hotel. Stop by to see why customers leave completely satisfied and full of useful information about life in Germany.

Congratulations to Team 221st's Army Family Team Building Program, recognized as the Army's best AFTB program of the year, and to Kelly Gemin, the top instructor of the year for medium-sized installations.